



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

August 28, 2020

The Honorable Frank Pallone
Chairman
Committee on Energy and Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Pallone:

Thank you for your letter regarding the 2.5 GHz Rural Tribal Priority Window. Closing the digital divide is my top priority as Chairman. I have seen for myself what affordable high-speed Internet access can do for a community—for its families, its schools, its hospitals, its farms, its businesses—as well as the impact of its absence. I also fully recognize the importance of broadband and telecommunications services in Tribal communities, particularly in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The 2.5 GHz Rural Tribal Priority Window, which opened February 3, presents a unique opportunity for eligible Tribal entities to obtain licenses for prime mid-band spectrum that can help Tribes address their connectivity needs. While the application window was originally scheduled to close on August 3, in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, it was extended an additional 30-days, until 6:00 PM EDT on September 2, 2020.

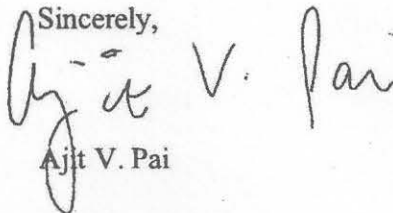
This 30-day extension strikes an appropriate balance between providing more time for additional Tribal entities to apply and not unduly delaying the grant of licenses to those that already have applied. The Commission cannot begin the process of issuing licenses to eligible applicants until after the window closes, because we will not know the extent of mutually exclusive applications for as long as the window is open. A much longer extension would therefore substantially delay our award of licenses to Tribal entities and thus delay their ability to use this spectrum to connect those consumers living on Tribal lands. Moreover, in light of the simplified application process as well as the extensive outreach done by Commission staff—including contacting every single federally recognized Tribe and Alaska Native Village the month before the window opened, first by phone or other direct contact, and a second time by letter—a lengthy extension of the deadline is unnecessary. Indeed, the Commission has already received over 342 applications from Tribal entities during the window.

Commission staff continues to work hard on this groundbreaking initiative, enabling eligible Tribal entities to apply and avail themselves of its benefits as soon as possible. We encourage potential Tribal applicants to make inquiries via e-mail to RuralTribalWindow@fcc.gov so that Commission staff can answer any questions they might have about the application process.

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Again, I appreciate your interest in this matter. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Ajit V. Pai". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Ajit" being more prominent and followed by "V. Pai".

Ajit V. Pai



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Chairman
Subcommittee on Communications and Technology
Committee on Energy and Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

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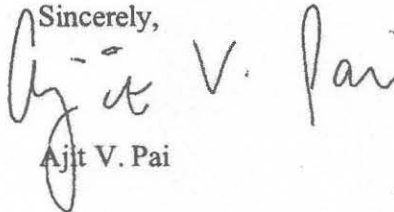
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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ajit V. Pai". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style. The first name "Ajit" is written with a large, stylized 'A' and 'j'. The middle initial "V." is written with a large 'V' and a period. The last name "Pai" is written with a large 'P' and 'i'.

Ajit V. Pai